

Life of the Spirit

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A PRAYER TO THE FATHER

BY

ST THOMAS MORE

The following prayer is taken from the Bodleian MS. Lat. th. d. 15, foll. 115 sqq, being a collection made by Robert Parkin of Erdwicke le Skete near Doncaster. The MS. is in Parkin's own hand and he entitles this prayer 'Prayers of Sir Thomas More' and concludes it with the words 'Compiled by Sir Thomas More sometime Chancellor of England with these additions following'—and he includes various other prayers, all of which have since been published. This beautiful prayer has apparently not yet been printed or at least is unfamiliar to the general public. The spelling has been slightly modernised.

 ELPE me, dere Father, helpe me. Help me with thy mighty grace, succour me with thy most merciful favour, rescue me from the manifold perils that I am in, for unless thou wilt of thy infinite goodness releve me, I am but a lost creature. Thy strait commandment is that I should love thee with all my heart, with all my sowle, with all my mind and with all my power. And this wot I well, I do not, but am full short and wide therefrom, which thing I perceive by the other loves that I have had of thy creatures heretofor, for such as I entirely loved, I loved them so, that I did seldom forget them. They were ever in my remembrance and almost continually my heart was occupied with them, and my thought ever ran upon them as well absent as present, specially when they were absent and much desired their presence and to be there where they were, or else my heart was never at restful quiet. But alas, my dear Father, I am not in this condition towards thee, for I keep not thee in my remembrance, nor bear thee in my thought, nor occupy my heart with thee so oft as I should, but for every trifle that cometh to my mind, I let thee slip and fall out thereof; and for every phantasy that stirreth my heart I set thee aside and shortly forget thee. I suffer many a trifling thought to abuse my soul at liberty. But with thee, my dear Father, have I lightly done, and forthwith turn me to the

remembrance of thy creatures, and so tarry with thee but a short while. The delight of thy creatures so pulleth me and draweth me hither and thither, my wretched desires so blind me, the false world so deceeveth me that I forget thee, that art my most loving Father, and art so much desirous to have my heart and love. And what are thy creatures, but creatures made by thee! Thou madest both me and them of naught, and thou far incomparable passest all them. And what are my desires when they are set upon thy creatures and not in order to thee? What are they but wretched and sinful affections? And finally what is this world, but a miserable exile full of perils and evil, far unlike unto that glorious country where thou art resident, and showest thy most excellent majesty in wonderful glory. There art thou clearly seen to all thy blessed angels and saints of thy most triumphal court. They be ever there present before thy blessed face, and see thee face to face. O my dear Father, there should be my heart, there should be my desire and remembrance principally occupied; if it so were I loved thee with all my heart, I should long to have a sight of thy blessed face. I should earnestly desire to see thy joyous country and kingdom. I should ever covet to be there present within thy most glorious court. But this alas I do not, and therefore I sorrow my grievous negligence, I weep for damnable forgetfulness, I lament my foolishness, yea my very madness that thus for trifles and vanities forget my most dear and loving Father. Alas woe is me! What shall I do? Whither may I turn? to whom shall I resort for help? where shall I seek for remedy against this worldly and earthly dullwardness of my heart?

Whither should I rather go than to my Father? to my most loving Father, to my most merciful Father, to him that of his infinite love and mercy hath given me boldness to call him Father; whose son Jesu my saviour hath taught me thus to call him. And I think verily that he is a Father, yea and a more loving Father than is the natural father to his child. These are the words spoken unto the natural father of this world, 'when ye that are imperfect with evils, can liberally give unto your children good gifts, how much rather your heavenly Father shall give a good spirit to them that shall ask it of him'.

These words most gracious Father, are the words of thy most dear and best beloved son Jesu, wherein he teacheth us that thou art our veray father; and maketh this promise of thy behalf, that thou shalt give thy holy spirit unto them that ask it of thee studiously. Thou wilt that we should believe him and faithfully trust his words, for thou testifiedst of him that he was thy most

entirely well beloved son, and badest us hear him and give a full faith to his words.

Wherefore we may be certain of three things. The first that thou art our Father; the second that thou art a more kind and loving father unto us than are the carnal fathers of this world to their children; the third that thou wilt give to such as devoutly ask it upon thee thy most holy spirit.

We may be well assured, that for thy inestimable goodness and for the honour of thy name thou wilt not disappoint thy promises, for as much as they were made by thy entirely well beloved Son Christ Jesu, whom thou sentest into this world to teach us the certain truth and to confirm the same unto us by his most precious blood which he shed for us upon the cross.

O Father where shall I rather seek for help in my necessity then at [of] thee, which wilt have me call thee Father. This name Father is a name of much love and tenderness, of much delight and pleasure and forceth the heart to much hope and comfort, and to many other delectable affections, and if nothing else were but this only name it might suffice to make me trust that thou which hast commanded me to call thee by this name Father, wilt help me and succour me at thy need whensoever I show unto thee; but much rather because my saviour thy Son Christ Jesu hath assured me that thou art a more kind and a more loving Father unto me, than was my own natural father. This assurance made by thy most entirely well beloved son should specially move both thee and me.

First it should move me to have a hope and confidence that thou wilt deal with me according to the same promise. Secondly it should also move thee to perform this promise effectively and so to show thyself a kind and loving father: This petition most dear beloved Father is agreeable to the same promise made by thy most entirely well beloved son my saviour Jesu.

I ask no other thing but thy good and holy spirit which he promised to be given unto all them that ask it upon thee. I know most gracious Father, that thou art here present with me, albeit I see thee not, but thou both seest me and hearest me, and there is no secret of my heart that is hid from thee. Thou hearest that I now ask of thy holy spirit, and thou knowest that I now pray there for; and that I am very desirous to have the same. O dear Father with all the inforcement of my heart I beseech thee to give thy holy spirit to me. Wherefore unless thou wilt disappoint the promise of thy dear son Jesu thou canst not but give me this holy spirit. The cause why I do so importunately ask him is that I may

be fully relieved of that misery whereof I complained unto thee before, that is to wit, that albeit thou straitly commanded that I should love the will all my heart, with all my soul, with all my mind and with all my power, yet I do not this which is to the great peril of my soul. But now if I may obtain thy most holy spirit he shall make me to love thee with all my heart, with all my soul, with all my mind, with all my power, for he is the principal author of all good love, he filleth the souls in whom he is received with abundance of charity, he is the very furnace of charity, he is the very fountain of all gracious affections, and he maketh their minds sweetly to burn in all godly desires and giveth unto them strength and power courageously to follow all ghostly affections and specially towards thee.

Wherefore dear Father, when thou hast straightly commanded me thus to love thee with all my heart, and thus I would right gladly do, but without thy help and without thy holy spirit I cannot perform the same. I beseech thee shed upon my heart thy most holy spirit, by whose gracious presence I may be warmed, heated and kindled with the spiritual fire of charity and with the sweet burning love of all ghostly affections, that I may fastly set my heart, soul and mind upon thee, and surely trust that thou art my well beloved Father. And according to the same I may love thee with all my heart, with all my soul, with all my mind, and with all my power. Amen.

ERRATUM: A correspondent has pointed out that, in the article 'Tasting God' by Philip Barry, in our last issue (June, p. 543), the reference for the words 'By love he can be gotten and holden . . .' is to *The Cloud of Unknowing*, not to Mother Julian of Norwich.—
EDITOR.

THE PRAYER OF THE AGONY

BY

GERALD VANN, O.P.¹



He began to be sorrowful: he began to be afraid. We live today in a world so haunted by fear that this story of Christ's agony must be very close to us. Anxiety lies heavy on the heart of men; and on the lips of philosophers the very word has become a commonplace. But it is not only fear that we share with this figure in the garden. The most fearful thing about the world's fear is its hopelessness, its sense of *futility*, a futility reflected again by those philosophers for whom anxiety is an anguish from which there is no issue. Here, in the garden, he began to be afraid: and it was indeed a dread of the torments to come; it was indeed the burden of loneliness; it was the terrible sense of defilement, the even physical horror of the black waters of evil overwhelming him; but added to all this there was the knowledge that it would all to some extent be in vain, to some extent be futile.

If we search for a solution to the problem of pain we can hope to find it only in the tears of God, only in the divinity of Christ. God so loved the world that he was willing to allow the horror of sin, and the suffering that comes of it—why? Because then, by becoming man he could share in the suffering, and thereby could reveal to us the richness of reality, the deep mystery of love, in a way he could never otherwise have done; and so, in the end, we in our turn could become something deeper and richer than we should ever otherwise have been. And in this scene, which is ultimate love unfolding itself in what seems like ultimate tragedy, that answer is given, that love is given; and yet he was despised and rejected, he *is* despised and rejected; and for many it is as though it had never been, and for many of us Christians it is in practice as though it had never been.

And yet, though the sense of futility is woven into the texture of the agony, the agony itself is still only a moment in the Passion; and he approaches it not with hopelessness but with joy, and it ends not in hopelessness but in the ringing triumphant cry, *Consummatum est*, The perfect work is achieved; and there follows not darkness and emptiness but the spearpoint of light of resurrection, the new day. Nor is it merely that joy succeeds sorrow as sorrow had succeeded joy: this sense of futility is *creative* of what

¹ The text of a broadcast on the Third Programme (B.B.C.), Tuesday in Holy Week, 12 April 1949.

is to come. Without it the Passion would not have been so perfect: for love is greatest when it is stripped of all sense of achievement, all return, and is sheer naked self-giving. That is what we watch in the garden: the divine self-emptying which alone could annihilate the self-centredness of man. He was despised and rejected and left utterly alone, that his acceptance of his lovelessness and loneliness might deliver us from ours.

And as from the darkness of the garden there comes the light of universal deliverance, so it can be in our own souls. Watching with him, we can teach ourselves first a sense of sin, a sense of the reality of the evil that is in us. But we must not stop there. We take our sorrow for it, not to an implacable judge, but to the prodigal father of the parable, to the God who says, No matter when you come back, nor even *why* you come back, provided only you come back in the end there will be the music and the lights and the feasting to welcome you. And so out of the sorrow is born a deeper love; and Christ is comforted not only by an angel, not only by the love of those who have never rejected him, but by the sorrow of those who have, but who have then returned to him in greater love.

This sorrow then is creative. For it brings us to the point of self-knowledge at which we realise our own futility, realise that of ourselves we can produce nothing, nothing except deficiency and evil: but that very fact means that now we can begin to live and act because now we can stop hindering God, we can stop spoiling everything, and God can use us now because now we can lie still in his artist-hands and become tools for his purposes. The sense of our own futility thus becomes the first essential condition of any saving activity on our part.

And the same is true of the world as a whole. Once bring its futility to the feet of Christ and futility is turned into humility; and then the whole of God's redeeming omnipotence can flow in upon the world and quicken it to life again. And so, if only in this darkness, if only in sharing this sorrow, humanity can learn to see more clearly its condition, can go deeper and become wiser than to rest content with a sense of God without a sense of sin, or, far worse, a sense of sin without God, then out of that tragic sense of life which is modern man's burden and privilege it will fashion a new heaven and a new earth, because not God but sin will become alien to it.

II

Jerusalem, Jerusalem . . . , how often would I have gathered thy children, as the hen doth gather her chickens under her wing, and thou wouldest not. The blindness of the Jewish people, the heavi-

ness of the apostles who could not watch one hour with him, these are paralleled by the apathy of us who are called his followers today. We are witnessing today, as Berdyaev wisely said, not a crisis in human history, but the crisis of human history. It is the spirit of man, the human personality, which is at stake. But the disciples sleep. Year by year these events of the Passion are put before us and we are asked to see their implications for ourselves and for the world; and you would say that no human heart could fail to be moved by them, to be spurred to energy and action by them. But the disciples sleep. Why is it so?

If, with sorrow in our hearts, we try to answer that question, there is a danger that confronts us at the outset, the danger of thinking that the word apathy means inactivity. It means something much deeper: a question not of action but of passion, of suffering. The disciples who slept had been upbraided by Christ as men of little *faith*. But faith is an attitude to a *person*: we believe not in a creed but through a creed: we believe in a *person*. And that means that the strength of our faith depends on our knowledge of the person. Living faith is loving faith: the kind of faith which is based not merely on knowledge about a person, but on knowledge of, experience of, a person. The Middle Ages learned from the pseudo-Denys the vital distinction between *discens divina* and *patiens divina*: it is not enough to learn about God, we have to learn God, to experience God. And apathy means precisely a lack not of doing but of experiencing. We, unlike the disciples, know exactly what was happening in the garden; but we shall go on sleeping as they did unless our knowledge about the facts becomes transformed into an experiencing of the facts. A sense of futility produces apathy, and apathy produces inactivity; but once change apathy towards Christ into sympathy with Christ, suffering with Christ, and then futility is transformed into humility, and inaction into the boundless energy and activity of the saints. So our Lord said to them, precisely, Watch and pray, lest you sink into death of soul. Watch: be aware, not with a cold, scientific appraisal, but with your heart, *patiens divina*; and then, inevitably, pray: for these experiences are inevitably then a living with God, a state of conscious union with God. Without this, no amount of energy or activity will save the world, because without this no amount of energy or activity can transform the world. Humanity is in danger of being killed from within by fear and hate; and the only thing that can conquer fear and hate is love; and the only thing that can fill the world with love is this sympathy with God, the daily experiencing, in prayer, of divine things, the daily sharing in the

life and love of God, the state of being, as St Paul put it, dead, apathetic, to sin, but alive to God, to love.

III

They came to a garden, and it was night. The little walled enclosure, remote from the city, the silvery olive trees, the disciples sleeping: everything is still. Stillness is the womb of all great achievement: the immobility not of inaction but of intense energy. It was wisely said: Nobody but a fool would mistake silence for empty-headedness; nobody but a fool would confuse the immobility of the monk with aridity and death of soul. But stillness is something that has to be *achieved*. We tend nowadays to think of silence as the privation of sound; whereas in fact it is noise that is the privation of silence. If we want to watch with Christ and live with Christ we must first learn to be still. Throughout the Passion there are these enclaves of silence against the background of noise and tumult; and the sound and the fury signify nothing but death, produce nothing but futility: it is the silence that is creative of life. Christ had commanded the waves, Be still, and they had obeyed him; man refuses to obey, and is lost in a whirlpool of noise and commotion that lead only to chaos. If we are to be saved from our futility we must recover the faculty of being still: must make an enclave of silence within our own souls.

He said to them, Watch and pray. We shall never live in that other dimension which is our true element unless we learn to be still, in that state of awareness we call prayer. Sometimes indignation is aroused by the suggestion that if we want to heal the world's evils we should pray: to sit still and do nothing, we are told, is simply to invite the evils to overwhelm us. But prayer, even the prayer of petition, is not asking God to do something for us while we remain idle; it is not the negation of activity; it is the essential condition of the only kind of activity which can ever drive out evil. Without it we can never hope to acquire wisdom or love; and without these, activity is futile. The sense of futility is indeed the price we pay for having lost not only the power to be still but even the desire to be still.

There are some, again, who see in this story a proof not of the power but of the purposelessness of prayer. Christ, they say, prayed that the cup might pass from him, and prayed in so great an agony of earnestness that his sweat fell to the ground like thick drops of blood; but his prayer remained unanswered. But this is to misunderstand the nature not only of Christ's prayer but of all prayer. He prayed, but conditionally, as we always must: Not my will but thy will be done. And the prayer was heard. St Luke tells us that

after his first prayer an angel came to strengthen him; and you can see the change wrought in him if you read in St Matthew the different words of his second prayer: not now the simple cry of anguish, Let this cup pass from me, but the fuller, readier acceptance: If this cup may not pass from me, but I must drink it, thy will be done. So in the stillness of prayer strength comes to him; so it will come to us if we watch and pray with him; and in that stillness too, and only there, humanity as a whole will find new heart.

IV

Father, if this cup may not pass from me, but I must drink it, thy will be done. Obedience to God's will is the keynote of the whole Gospel story. You find it at the very beginning, when Mary is told of her destiny: Be it done to me according to thy word. You find it constantly on the lips of Christ: My food is to do the will of him that sent me. Here in the garden, the agony, the struggle within him, is caused by the shrinking of his nature from what that will was to mean for him; and as here he prays, Thy will be done, so in the final cry on the Cross, *Consummatum est*, The work is completed, he is declaring the fact, the will had been done. Obedience is the keynote of the story because it is the essential fact in the story. Sin means the rejection, by human pride and egoism, of God's authority; and from our egoism all our troubles spring. Christ saves us from our troubles by reversing the process, annihilating egoism—and asserting true selfhood—by a total acceptance of God's will. But his obedience can be of value to us only in so far as we share in it. For us too God's will has to become the essential fact, and Thy will be done the essential prayer.

We have been thinking of the casting out of apathy and futility by the love that is learnt in stillness and prayer. But that love is the love of God's will. When we pray for other things it should always be with that condition; and when our prayer is not petition at all but simply the attempt to be aware of God, to be with God, still it is from a heart trying to love his will that it must come. But we must pray the same prayer explicitly too, as Christ taught us. We must pray it even though at first we cannot fully mean it. that in the end we may mean it more. At first there are many things we could not readily accept, things that would make us grumble and rebel. But if we go on praying the prayer as best we may, the area of our obedience will grow; and perhaps in the end we shall come to mean it wholly, and then we shall be saints: for indeed sanctity has been defined as simply 'willing what happens to us by God's order'. And meanwhile other things would be happening

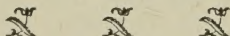
in us. For it is this that would finally and inevitably give us peace, because it would give us stillness and serenity; it would annihilate anxiety; and so the futility and the fear would finally be driven out.

It would give us serenity; but not the inhuman serenity of the man untouched by human tragedy. It would give us the serenity of Christ when his prayer was over and he stepped forward to meet his betrayer and his Cross. Not the false serenity which blinds itself to the fact of evil; but the living and loving faith which knows that evil is not ultimate, that to live in God's will is to live in God's love and care, and that therefore whatever comes to us by his order is good and we need not worry but only try to bless his name; and that even though the threat of some approaching pain or sorrow fills us with terror as Christ's heart was filled with terror, still we can hope to find courage for it and achievement through it, if we pray as he prayed, Thy will be done.

Our Father, who art in heaven, hallowed be thy name.

Thy kingdom come, thy will be done, on earth as it is in heaven.

Give us this day our daily bread: give us the stillness of heart that will enable us to know thee, the courage and strength to love thy will when thy will is hard for us, the sympathy to watch with thee and share the Cross with thee to the healing of the nations, the love that alone can save us and make us live. Turn our hopelessness into humility, and so, forgive us our trespasses as we forgive them that trespass against us. And lead us not into temptation but deliver us from evil. Amen.



THE SIMPLE SIGHT OF SIN

BY

CONRAD PEPLER, O.P.



OTHER JULIAN was able to resolve the conflicting paradoxes involved in the relation between the world and God because she had attained to that concrete touch by which the Spirit of God brings all into one. By the 'touch' of divinity the Spirit draws all the experience and ideas of a life-time into the immediate orbit of the single and simple reality of his being.

And what might this noble Lord do of more worship and joy to me than to shew me that am so simple this marvellous homeliness? (c. 7, p. 16.)

The holy woman had progressed from the simplicity of mere creatureliness which a man shares with material creation, in which

there exist the least variety and no paradox save that of being itself; and she had progressed to a human simplicity in which ideas are gathered from experience and formed into a more or less single synthesis. She had formed this synthesis, as so many simple Christians before and after her, with the guidance of faith but still within the orbit of human experience. Now she is presented with the simplicity of God in whom all perfections are found in absolute unity. Inevitably a conflict arises at first between the human simplicity of an ideal synthesis and that of the concrete, divine simplicity. In the end the power of the Spirit induces a simple gaze which does not require a rationalised and argued unity because mind and will with the 'substance' of the soul have been drawn beyond to the plane where all passed experiences are found to have their source in the eternal act of God. Yet the contrast between the human and the divine mode will inevitably arouse a struggle before the privileged soul attains to that simplicity which is to be found in every saint whether of great or small human intelligence. For Mother Julian this struggle centres round the fundamental problem of God's attitude to evil in view of the all-embracing nature of the love of God. The resolution of her problem, arising as it does from the contrast of her former human experience with the impact of this touch of the divinity in the substance of her soul, we must follow in some detail.

The first puzzle comes as soon as she begins to revert to the fact of sin. Directly she has been shown 'God in a point' she begins to reflect with the help of the gift of fear—'with a soft dread'—on the nature of sin: *What is sin?* (3rd revelation, c. 11, p. 26.)

For I saw truly that God doeth all thing, be it never so little. . . .

Wherefore me behoveth needs to grant that all-thing that is done, it is well done: for our Lord God doeth all. (c. 11, p. 27.)

In view of God's omnipotence, co-operating in every aspect of reality, Mother Julian is forced to conclude that 'sin is no deed'. Looking at the source of all reality and of all deeds, she cannot see sin. God does *all* things well so that nothing can be amiss (p. 28). This very metaphysical aspect of sin, looked at from God's point of view, she admits is only the first shewing of the mystery which is later more humanly discussed, but it is naturally a fundamental idea, and one which many find a difficulty in accepting, that sin is of itself an absence rather than a positive reality. Although it seems to conflict with our daily experience of evil and particularly of our own propensity to sin, any denial of this truth would lead logically to some form of the pestilent manicheism to which many are so prone. Evil is not a positive principle but a disorder, a lack of right

order; and an examination of St Thomas's doctrine concerning sin will show what this means. In his analysis of the Augustinian definition of sin as a word or deed or desire against the eternal law he explains that the positive reality so evident in 'word, deed or desire', which seems to contradict Mother Julian's 'sin is no deed', makes up the material element of a sinful act; but, says he, what belongs to the essence of evil (*ratio mali*), which is like the 'formal element in sin', is contained in the words 'against the eternal law' (I-II, 71, 6). The person who is considering the love of God and how it is the cause of things evidently sees this 'material' of sin insofar as it has reality and being as coming from this eternal and ceaselessly loving will of God. The contrariety does not appear therein. He can see how human love comes forth from God but he does not see that limitation by which a man loves another to the exclusion of God, absorbed by the creature, turning from the Creator—'*Contra legem aeternam*'.¹

The problem of evil in such a vision of divine love reduces itself to the simple matter of sin. Other evils, which people consider as a problem because the evil seems to have God for its cause rather than the will of man turning from God such as pain and death, are quite easily put into perspective by divine love. A vision which reaches the infinite love of God through the appearance of Christ's bitter agony and death, as did Mother Julian's, does not find much incompatibility between such relative evils and the love of God. 'Christ's precious passion' means the overthrow of evil, though the devil continues to work as energetically afterwards as before; and it was the joy caused by seeing how God was never wrath, scorning and setting at naught the malice of the devil, that caused Mother Julian to laugh. She saw in this, the fifth revelation,

that all the woe and tribulation that he (the devil) hath done to them shall be turned to increase of their joy, without end; and all the pain and tribulation that he would have brought them to shall endlessly go with him to hell (p. 32).

Immediately, in the next revelation, our Lord thanks her for the pain she has suffered, and that alone is worth all the suffering conceivable; this is the bliss to which all pain is leading and which brings a true perspective. Yet no escape is offered the soul to look up into heaven and so to numb the senses which are in contact with the immediate turmoil of life. As Mother Julian is plunged back into the heaviness of herself and a weariness of her life, in the seventh revelation, she realises that the interludes of comfort are

¹ Von Hügel shows the Pseudo-Dionysian trait in all this, but emphasises, I think too much, the Neo-platonic element in this mystical approach to evil. He gives further references to St Augustine and St Thomas (*Mystical Elements*, ii, 290, sqq).

not more significant of God's love than the times of weariness, pain and isolation. In this we are reminded of some wise words of Abbot Chapman writing to one of his spiritual children: 'Do not think that the right way to bear a trial—or many trials together—is to love God so much that you can bear the trial with joy, *so that it ceases to be a trial*. On the contrary, it is obvious that the essence of a suffering of any kind is that we suffer from it! We hate it.' (*Letters*, p. 157.) Suffering retains its sting, but one does not revel in the pain nor wallow in it.

And therefore it is not God's will that we follow the feelings of pain in sorrow and mourning for them (p. 36). All this discussion of pain in Mother Julian's mind is closely related to the hardest and most tortuous suffering of all—that of the point when the soul is being wrested from the body; so that she sees death for those who accept this suffering in the right way as being the sudden passage from utter desolation to the endless joy for which it is all intended. She writes here and elsewhere of the suddenness of the passage through pain into the eternal joy (cf. pp. 36, 80, 104, 160). But she seems to imply a certain parallel to death which is to be found in intense pain which is not mortal.

Thus when we, by the working of mercy and grace, be made meek and mild, we are fully safe; suddenly is the soul oned to God when it is truly peaced in itself: for in Him is found no wrath. (c. 49 p. 104.)

Such experiences will require further elucidation, but it is worth noting here that writers on mystical states such as Farge and von Hügel have emphasised the suddenness by which God can transform such states of suffering into a more complete union. Souls often discover a remarkable sense of spiritual health given to them just as they are in the deepest trials.

But we must return to the view of sin in this ultimate context of God's will which allows pain in order to purify from sin. The next five shewings of Mother Julian's lead her to a deeper penetration through the wounded side of Christ into the mystery of God's love until by the thirteenth she reaches her celebrated conclusion that 'Synne is behovabil'—Sin is behovely; it behoved that there should be sin (c. 27, p. 56). Pain is occasioned by sin; but in the final event when God's will is completely worked out in the full cycle of temporal affairs sin and pain will be the occasion of greater good.

It is sooth that sin is cause of all this pain; but all shall be well, and all shall be well and all manner of thing shall be well (p. 57). This refrain contains much that is mysterious and for the next thirteen chapters Mother Julian is concerned to elucidate the mystery of sin.

It makes a strange contrast to compare this comforting vision with the horrifying, quite unbearably disgusting, view of sin which has been shown to many a great saint and one that the average Christian would expect to be universal among those who believe that Christ had had to die in this frightful agony of the cross in order to expunge the stain of sin. Tauler, looking at these same sufferings which Mother Julian beheld, could reflect, 'I have become naked, and poor, and wretched, and unclean, and, like the beasts of the stall, I have become rotten in my own dung and filth'. Blessed Angela of Foligno, whose experiences began in a way very similar to that of the recluse of Norwich, St Catherine of Siena and multitudes of others have been plunged into feelings of revulsion at the sight of sin.² Mother Julian herself, when she comes later to contrast sin with grace, is in no doubt of the foulness of the evil:

Sin is in sooth viler and more painful than hell, without likeness: for it is contrary to our fair nature. For as verily as sin is unclean, so verily it is unnatural, and thus an horrible thing to see for the loved soul that would be all fair and shining in the sight of God. (c. 63, pp. 157-8.)

But even here it is the fairness of nature perfected by grace which is really holding her attention. In this we find a close connection with *The Cloud of Unknowing* and its teaching on 'the lump of sin' which should not be specified or allowed to fill the imagination with horrible details lest the soul be distracted from God himself. 'In the naked word *sin*' Mother Julian sees 'all that is not good'—all 'noughting', all pains, all purgations. Yet

all this was shewed in a touch and quickly passed over into comfort: for our good Lord would not that the soul were affeared of this terrible sight (c. 27 p. 56).

If the soul is thus saved the harrowing details which form so considerable a part of sermons and exhortations on sin and hell, she is not left to ignore sin. Indeed swinging apparently to the opposite extreme and recognising that sin 'hath no manner of substance nor no part of being, nor could it be known but by the pain it is cause of' (p. 56), she is assured that God does not blame sin in those who are to be saved. Indeed 'sin shall be no shame to man but worship' (c. 38, p. 77).

Then were it a great unkindness to blame or wonder on God for my sin, since he blameth not me for sin. (p. 57.)

² Cf. Tauler, *Meditations on the Life and Passion of our Lord Jesus Christ* (English trans.: p. 107). Bl. Angela of Foligno in Thorold, *Christian Mysticism* (p. 112-3) and St Catherine's *Dialogue* (*passim*). In view of the latter's vivid descriptions of the evil of sin it must be remembered that she often repeats with Mother Julian, 'Sin is nothing'.

This, as she realises, is a great mystery—'a marvellous high mystery hid in God'—but one which requires the pacifying work of simplification by the Spirit before the soul can accept it without trouble or dismay.³

For there would seem to be a serious conflict between the general teaching of the Church on sin and its punishment and this special shewing of comfort in the endless love of God. Sin has caused much havoc; how can all be well? Mother Julian would like to have 'some more open declaring wherewith I might be eased in this matter' (c. 29, p. 60). Holy Church teaches constantly the eternal punishment of hell for the bad angels and for man dying in sin (pp. 66-7). The common teaching of Holy Church, in which Mother Julian had been well grounded in her training for the religious life, insisted that God was angry, 'wrath', with sinners and that forgiveness meant forgiveness from this wrath which the sinner had incurred. The sinner deserves blame and wrath. Yet apparently against all this common doctrine the vision of the infinite and changeless love of God makes it impossible for him to forgive because he is never angry.

Our Lord God, ament himself, may not forgive, for He may not be wroth . . . it is the most impossible that may be that God should be wroth. (c. 49, p. 103.)⁴

These are two judgments or 'dooms', one higher in the light of God's love, the other lower, based on the first principle of the faith taught by the Church. How can they be reconciled?

In order to find a comprehensive solution to this great puzzle which lies at the base of so much 'mystical' speculation, it will be necessary to gather the threads from the whole book of Mother Julian's revelations since this constitutes one of her main pre-occupations throughout. We may begin by returning to the source of her visions—the crucified figure of Christ held before her in her dying condition by the curate. She views the horrifying spectacle of Christ's sweet face on the verge of his death—the terrible change of colour, the clotted and dried blood forming a garland about his head beneath the garland of thorns. St Thérèse of Lisieux had this sight of the bruised face of the Messiah as a background to the whole of her spirituality; Père Petitot has pointed out how important this is in linking the way of spiritual childhood to the authentic

3 Mother Julian never allows her revelations to draw her away from the faith in which she is most securely grounded. She recognises that there are some mysteries, containing truths beyond our comprehension, which are intelligible in themselves but which will not be shown to us. Other mysteries God does wish us to know about—the Church in particular teaches the latter. (cc. 33-4).

4 This paradox is worked out in particular from chapter 45 to chapter 50.

spirit of the Gospels.⁵ This image of the terrible pain of Christ stands not for the threatening anger of the offended majesty of God but for the infinite desire which he had for the salvation of every man. The dryness of the blood and of the skin reminds the soul that Christ had a most bitter physical thirst (c. 17). But this thirst itself stands for the spiritual thirst 'which is desire in him as long as we be in need, drawing us up to his bliss' (c. 31, p. 64). The disfigured face of Christ is therefore a sign of the 'thirst of God' longing to draw man to himself, a longing based not on any lack in himself but on the absence and the emptiness which is in the creature partly because he is a creature but more especially because of the absence and emptiness of sin. (cf: c. 75, p. 183.) Mother Julian sees the pain of our Lord as the hardest possible.

I mean not only more pain than all men might suffer, but also that he suffered more pain than all men of salvation that ever were from the first beginning unto the last day might tell about or fully think. (c. 20, p. 44.)

And the reasons she gives for this suffering are closely parallel to those of St Thomas (compare III, 46, 6). There are however three ways of considering this terrible suffering: either one can simply insist on 'the hard pain that he suffered' (which might be regarded as the *sacramentum tantum* of the Passion), or penetrating this external representation one sees 'the love that made him to suffer' which infinitely surpasses all his pains (the *res et sacramentum*), or finally there appears 'the joy and the bliss that made him to be well-satisfied in it' (the *res tantum*). (cf: cc. 21-23, pp. 45-9.) The love of our Lord represented in this thirst is so intense that he would suffer even more and die all over again if it were possible (p. 47-8), which is the burden of so many revelations to the saints who have been told over and over again that Christ would die in this anguish for every individual sinner. The Precious Blood is another, even more dynamic, symbol of this same 'longing' in God for men's salvation, the blood which was poured out for sin and which is always pleading before the face of the father, the blood which provided a background for the life of St Catherine, whose vision of it is often echoed here.⁶

In contrast with the sight of Christ's countenance suffering for

5 Cf. Henry Petitot, O.P., *Saint Teresa of Lisieux*. (London, Burns Oates; 1927) p. 62. She took 'of the Holy Face' as an addition to her name during her novitiate.

6 Compare Hebrews (the Epistle of the Precious Blood) 7, 25 with Mother Julian c. 12 p. 30. Also an interesting comparison could be made with St Catherine (cf. Mother Julian c. 61 p. 155 and c. 63 p. 158). St Catherine in her death agony, oppressed by the horrible catastrophe of the beginning of the Great Schism, could but breathe this word 'Blood'.

sin is shown later the face of the Father sitting at rest and sending his Servant to do his will.

The colour of his face was fair-brown—with full seemly features; his eyes were black, most fair and seemly, shewing outward full of lovely pity, and shewing within him an high regard, long and broad and full of endless heavens. And the lovely looking where-with he looked upon his Servant continually . . . methought it might melt our hearts for love and burst them in two for joy. (c. 51, p. 112.)

The whole of this scene is mysterious in its sudden transferences from Christ to all mankind, from the descent of the word into the womb of Mary to Adam's falling into sin. But it offers one of the keys to the paradox of sin; for the face of the Father remains unchangingly fair and piteous, looking upon man either as falling into sin or upon the Son of God becoming man and suffering out of obedience to the will of the Father, falling into the slough of sin without himself being sinful. For, indeed, pain and agony and the tortured face of man cannot signify the wrath of God, since the one who suffered the most of all mankind is his well-beloved son.

When Adam fell, God's son fell: because of the rightful oneing which had been made in heaven God's Son might not be disparted from Adam. (For by Adam I understand All-Man.) Adam fell from life to death into the deep of this wretched world, and after that into hell: God's son fell with Adam, into the deep of the Maiden's womb, who was the fairest daughter of Adam; and for this end—to excuse Adam from blame in heaven and in earth; and mightily he fetched him out of hell. (c. 51, p. 116).

This contains the core of the solution of the paradox. We might well expect the paradox of sin and God's love to be resolved in and through the Being who was both God and man, and who died for sin. For it is unthinkable that God should be truly angry with us and we continue to exist ('if God might be wroth for an instant, we should never have life nor place nor being'. c. 49, p. 103), for all creatures exist by the will of God and there can be no distinction between the will of God and his love. And when we depart from him towards the noughting of sin his loving, creative gaze follows our every step and even gives it its being.

In all this the sweet eye of pity and love is lifted never off us, nor the working of mercy ceaseth. (c. 48, p. 101.)

In God there is no shadow of change, and nothing happens now of which he was not cognisant from the beginning. He does not have to reorganise his providential plans when a man falls into sin. Nothing 'is done by hap'; there is no chance or accident with God (c. 11, pp. 27-8). Providence, disposing all things sweetly, causes the most infinitesimal part of created being to exist for a purpose,

guiding it towards its end (cf. *Summa* I, 22, 2-4). Thus the unity of God who is Good, Life, Truth, Love, Peace, makes it impossible for him to be here angry and there forgiving and loving (c. 46, p. 97). His love is endless and unchangeable and this is symbolised for Mother Julian in the fact that though she laughed for the comfort of the vision, the Holy Face remained ever the same though the pains were overpowering the devil.

When I saw him scorn his (the devil's) malice, it was by leading of mine understanding into our Lord, that is to say it was an inward shewing of verity, without changing of look. For, as to my sight, it is a worshipful property of God's that He is ever the same. (c. 13, p. 32.)

At the day of judgment St Catherine saw that the face of the Word would appear to the just a thing for reverence with great joy, to the damned a thing of terror; 'not that his face changes, because he is unchangeable' (*Dial*: c. 39).

God himself is the end of all this activity of creation; his love changeless and infinite goes out to things and brings them back to himself in this wonderful unity. He cannot disapprove of what he is doing.

Right as he ordained unto the best, right so he worketh continually, and leadeth it to the same end; and he is ever full-pleased with himself and with all his works. (c. 35, p. 71.)

All this shows, as it were, God looking out steadfastly in unflinching and unstinting affection for all he is making. If there is any change, then, it must be sought among contingent beings, among the creatures whom God loves. These creatures cannot see all the being and love of God in its wholeness and therefore they seek out aspects of God's love. Thus the one indivisible will of God is a 'permissive will' in so far as he allows us to be wayward ('by his sufferance we fall'); it is the will of love and wisdom in so far as he is creating us even as we walk from him into sin ('in his blissful love with his might and his wisdom we are kept'); and it is mercy when he raises us from the slough of sin ('by mercy and grace we are raised'—c. 35, p. 72). Mercy itself ceases in heaven, not again that God changes, but the objects of his constant love are no longer to be raised from sin—they are already raised to the bliss of the full share in his love.⁷

In other words, the wrath of God, so insisted upon by preachers of all eras, is indeed a reality, but a reality in man not in God.

⁷ The whole of this very important doctrine which runs right through the *Revelations of Divine Love* should be compared with St Thomas. In the 1st book of the *Contra Gentiles*, c. 91, where he deals with God's love, he shows how all the different attributes—Justice, Anger, Mercy, Repenting, etc.—are simply different aspects, according to the effects, of that self-same, changeless love.

God always loves, and loves to the intensity of suffering the pains of the Crucifixion even for the sin of one man, but man may for his part turn that ever faithful, infinitely intense and ceaselessly creative love into wrath, calling down God's anger upon himself. The spring gives forth clear and helpful water, the poison is in the mouth of the man who drinks to his damnation.

I saw no wrath but on man's part; and that forgiveth he (God) in us. For wrath is not else but a frowardness and a contrariness to peace and love; and either it cometh of failing of might, or of failing of wisdom, or of failing of goodness: which failing is not in God, but is on our part. For we by sin and wretchedness have in us a wretched and continuant contrariness to peace and to love. (c. 48, p. 101.)

If a man allows the pain and suffering that are sent by the loving mercy of God for his purification to draw him into despair he is in fact condemning himself. This is of course the common teaching of the Church that man sends himself to hell; and in that we may recognise that God is not wroth but that so long as men are in travail and temptation his love appears as overflowing mercy.

This then is the simple sight of sin which the Church herself entertains as she contemplates the Crucifix during Holy Week. Wondering at the pains of the Son of God, the deacon sings on Holy Saturday morning '*O Felix Culpa*'. God has never changed but foreseeing, and even permitting this most foul evil called sin, he had no other object than the greater expansion of love and mercy.

Thus we have now matter of mourning: for our sin is cause of Christ's pains; and we have lasting matter of joy; for endless love made him to suffer. (c. 52, p. 124.)

For it needeth us to fall. . . . The mother may suffer the child to fall sometimes, and to be hurt in diverse manners for its own profit, but she may never suffer that any manner of peril come to the child, for love. (c. 61, p. 153.)

Mother Julian's reason suggests to her that she should look up to heaven and away from the holy and tortured face of Christ and so escape the horrors of sin and its consequent anguish. But her faith kept her gaze on that sacred face and would have done so in sorrow to the end of the world rather than come to heaven by any other way. She chooses Jesus for her heaven, and Jesus on the Cross (c. 19, p. 42). And in the tenth revelation she sees all this mystery in terms of the Sacred Heart, that symbol of love, a love cleft in two by pain that it might pour sorrow out over the creature and bring it back to unity. Looking to his Side she beheld a delectable and fair place large enough for all to rest in peace and love.

And with the sweet beholding he shewed his blessed heart cloven in two. (c. 24, p. 51.)

THE ANALYST AND THE CONFESSOR¹

BY

VICTOR WHITE, O.P.



WE are often assured by those who should know best that sacramental confession and psychological analysis² are very much the same thing. On this point at least there would seem to be a considerable measure of agreement between many Catholic spokesmen and many psychologists: if they differ it is only in the assertion of the superiority of their own respective wares. While the psychologists will tell us that sacramental confession is a sort of naïve and undeveloped, pre-scientific forerunner of a psychological analysis, it has become almost a commonplace among many Catholic apologists that analysis is a secularised and truncated form of sacramental confession.

The equation deserves somewhat more critical examination than it customarily receives. Doubtless there are certain superficial resemblances which might incline us to put them both into the same category, and it is probable that a more careful comparison of the two procedures may reveal still deeper affinities and connections between them than at first sight appear. But there are still more obvious and essential differences between them which cannot be overlooked without risk of great confusion both in theory and in practice. We have only to take a look at what actually takes place in the confessional and what actually takes place in the analyst's consulting room to see that the differences, even on the surface, are very marked; and a closer acquaintance with their respective aims and presuppositions will further widen the chasm that divides them. We shall soon learn that the analyst who plays the confessor will be as bad an analyst as the confessor who plays the analyst will be a bad confessor, and we shall be put on our guard against the dangerous type of apologetic which might be understood as offering the confessional as a substitute for psychotherapy: dangerous because of the disappointment it must arouse in those who know no better than to suppose it to be a cure for psychoneurosis, and the contempt it must arouse in those who do. Nothing but

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² I use this somewhat clumsy term rather than 'psycho-analysis' lest I be thought to have in mind only Freudian analysis, of which alone the term 'psycho-analysis' can strictly be used. By 'psychological analysis' I understand any psychotherapy which employs depth-analysis, whether Freudian, Jungian, or any other.

good, we believe, can come from a closer acquaintance by the analyst of the practice of the sacrament of penance, or by the confessor of the practice of analysis. But before we can hope to see how the one can illuminate, and perhaps subserve, the other, it is of the greatest importance to avoid all initial blurring of their basic differences. Here, as always, *distinguer pour unir* is the indispensable precondition for accurate thinking.

And the distinctions are indeed basic, as becomes evident so soon as we attempt to sort out and compare the constituent ingredients of sacramental confession with those of psychological analysis.

Few analysts, and those hardly the most trustworthy, would be prepared to present us with a formula which would cover all the component elements which go to make up an analysis. Just how an analysis will proceed, of what it will consist, what part in it will be taken by the analyst and what by the patient, what it will and will not achieve and what paths it will follow: none of these can be determined in advance. Its starting-point, its development, its procedure and its term will alike be determined by the material which emerges in the analysis itself, by the patient's response and the analyst's skill. It is an adventure of exploration in uncharted territory: there may be compasses, but there are no ready-made maps. It is a medicine, but one for which there is no uniform prescription. The ingredients of which it is to be made will differ widely in every case, and will be dictated by the material itself and no *à priori* preconceptions. Indeed its therapeutic success will depend on nothing so much as on the ability of both analyst and analysant to rid themselves of predetermined plans and prejudices.

In striking contrast, thanks to centuries of actual practice and theological reflection, the ingredients of the sacrament of penance are neatly and definitely sorted out, formulated and tabulated. These ingredients, with their technical names, are familiar to most Catholics from their very catechisms. The instructed Catholic 'going to confession' knows fairly exactly what will happen; what he has to do and what the confessor has to do. He is probably familiar with the traditional dissection of the sacrament of penance into its component parts: he knows that, like all the sacraments, it consists of certain definite 'matter' and certain definite 'form'. He may not appreciate the logical and metaphysical considerations which have established this matter-form analogy as a technical device whereby theologians analyse the sacraments into their components; but at least he knows the authoritative character of its results. And he knows that the constituent elements of the sacrament of penance are thus authoritatively classified under three

heads: (1) remote matter; (2) proximate matter; and (3) form. These may well serve us here as terms of comparison.

The 'remote matter' of the sacrament of penance—that is to say, 'what it is all about', the subject with which it is concerned, the material of which it is made and to which the 'form' gives a specific 'shape' or significance—is stated to be *the sins of the penitent committed since baptism*.

At once a striking contrast jumps to the eye when we turn to the counterpart of this 'remote matter' in psychological analysis. Sin, truly, is an evil; and psychotherapy is also concerned, as is every therapy, with an evil. Moreover, both the sacrament and the analysis are concerned to remedy the evil. But the evil with which each is concerned is essentially different, even mutually opposed. Sin is defined as an evil human act; that is, a human activity which lacks the goodness and rightness it should have in conformity with divine law. In theological language it is *malum culpae*—'the evil men do'. It is, of its very nature as a human act, in some measure voluntary: and a sin is sinful in the precise measure in which it is willed. A psychoneurosis, on the contrary, is a certain *malum poenae*—an 'evil men suffer' or '*undergo*'. It is a sickness, and as such something essentially involuntary, and usually contrary to the sufferer's will, both in itself and in its symptoms and manifestations. It is something that *happens to us*, not something we *do*; though it may lead us to action, these actions are neurotic symptoms in the precise measure in which they are involuntary. We may say that while the sacrament of penance deals with certain evil results of human *freedom*, psychotherapy deals with certain results of human *compulsions*: with thoughts, feelings, emotions, conflicts, patterns of behaviour etc. which the patient 'cannot help', which are uncontrollable by his will and usually clean contrary to it. Confession presupposes the power to sin and to turn from sin and seek forgiveness; analysis usually presupposes necessity and impotence and seeks liberation and freedom. In short: the primary and direct concern of the sacrament is with wilful *misdeeds*; the primary and direct concern of analysis is with a certain kind of involuntary *misfortune*.

This difference is quite fundamental. Whatever resemblances may be found, we cannot overlook the essential difference in the material with which the sacrament of penance and any kind of psychotherapy are respectively concerned.

From this basic difference spring others which are hardly less striking. Sin, being essentially voluntary, is also essentially conscious, while it is of the very definition of any analytical psycho-

therapy that it is concerned, at least no less, with the unconscious. Sacramental confession, as we have already remarked, is concerned solely with actual sins committed after baptism: it is not concerned with inherited sin, whose remedy lies within the province of baptism itself. In contrast, psychotherapy cannot confine itself to factors acquired in the patient's own lifetime, still less limit itself to any definite date in the patient's history. It can on no account neglect inherited factors and dispositions; least of all can any depth-analysis which, under whatever name, recognises a 'collective unconscious' as an important factor in mental health and sickness.

The 'proximate matter' of the sacrament of penance is the three acts on the part of the penitent: confession, contrition and satisfaction. Here we have three definite and deliberate acts, interiorly performed and exteriorly expressed, required of the penitent as a *sine qua non* constituent of the sacrament. Each represents a pre-determined operation of mind or will in regard to the 'remote matter'. Confession implies conscious acknowledgment of that 'remote matter', and its expression in words. Contrition implies the turning of the will *from* the same, and its turning *to* God and the divine will. Satisfaction, the willing acceptance and performance of some task imposed as compensation and as a token of good faith and willingness to accept the penal consequences of sin.

It is presumably in the first of these—the act of confessing—that the resemblances between sacramental confession and psychological analysis are more particularly supposed to lie.

But the 'confession' required of the penitent and the 'confession' required of the analysant are two very different things; and the difference lies in the difference of 'remote matter' which we have already noted. What a penitent is expected to confess is very clearly defined and restricted to the sins committed since his baptism or his previous confession. No such limitation can bind the analysant. Though no analyst who knows his business will want to exclude such material, he will still less seek to limit his patient's 'confessions' to his real or alleged misdeeds. And he will be concerned with them not precisely as moral offences, but as causes or symptoms of neurosis, and as providing—together with the patient's conscious or unconscious attitudes to them—important elements in the total picture of the personality with which he has to do. The patient's 'good deeds' will interest him no less than his 'bad' ones (confessors are notoriously, and rightly, impatient with rehearsals of the penitent's virtues!) while dreams, free associations, spontaneous reactions and other manifestations of the unconscious will interest him still more. His business is less

with what the patient does than why he does it. Only from this totally different standpoint may there be some overlapping, but never complete identity, between sacramental and analytical 'confession'. The psychological processes demanded by each differ correspondingly: the former requires a certain concentration of conscious memory, and the orderly recital of a selection of its contents; the second, contrariwise, a mental and physical relaxation which permits the free flow of uncontrolled phantasy and the suspension of regular 'directed' mental activity. The uncomfortable confessional box with its hard kneeler, and the couch or armchair of the analyst's consulting room, admirably express and promote the two very different kinds of 'confession' for which each is appointed.

Psychological analysis knows nothing of contrition or satisfaction as predetermined acts to be required of the patient: it would fail entirely of its purpose were it to lay down in advance the conscious attitude which the analysant was to adopt to his material. This can no more be pre-determined than can the material itself.

Still less is there any equivalent in psychological analysis to the *form* of the sacrament of penance. This 'form' is the words of forgiveness pronounced by the priest: it is the specifying and determining element which makes the sacrament of penance to be what it is; it is the efficacious sign of reconciliation with God, and so the very remedy for the evil which is the sacrament's 'remote matter'. Nothing of the sort is to be found in psychological analysis. Some very superficial resemblance might be suspected in certain cases in which reconciliation is effected with some *imago* projected upon the analyst; but there will be no 'remedy' except in so far as the transference is resolved, the projection withdrawn and assimilated to the patient's own conscious ego. There is still considerable disagreement among analysts as to what their own precise rôle in analysis should be. But few, even of those who most strongly advocate his 'active' intervention in the process, would maintain that the ultimate remedy comes from the analyst rather than the analysant and his own response to his own material. None certainly would claim divine power and authority to forgive sin.

So the differences between sacramental confession as understood and practised in the Catholic Church and psychological analysis as known and practised today are considerable and profound. Are we then to conclude that there are no connections between them, and that they are so wholly diverse that they can hardly be spoken of in the same breath?

To say this would, we think, be a grave mistake. We may not overlook either the psychological value of sacramental confession or

the 'religious' features of many an analysis and the close connections which may be found between them. Here is a subject which deserves much more careful exploration and consideration than has yet been given it, or is possible in this brief essay. But once the essential differences between the two have been understood, we may offer a few suggestions as to where such exploration might profitably be directed.

It should be remembered that although *malum culpae* and *malum poenae*, sin and misfortune, are essentially different, and even opposite in their voluntariness and involuntariness respectively, there is a close causal link between them. It is elementary Christian teaching (and not only Christian) that the first is the ultimate cause of the second. Sin results in temporal (as well as eternal) punishments and consequences, and Saint Thomas Aquinas explains how the disorder and disharmony of man's psychological powers and activities are, more especially, the automatic outcome of sin (cf. *Summa Theol.* I-II, 82, 3 and 85, 3). This must not be misunderstood in the sense of the cruel and unchristian assumption that all suffering, especially mental suffering, must be attributed to the sufferer's own personal and actual sins (such as constitute the 'matter' of the sacrament of penance): we are forbidden straightway to ascribe it to the sins of 'this man or his parents' (John 9, 2). But it is true that original sin is the ultimate cause (by removing the original grace which was the cause of man's psychological integrity and harmony) of all such disorder, and that its perversity *can* be enhanced by personal, actual sin. It should further be remembered that not all such disorder (being quite 'normal' in fallen human nature) can be characterised as pathological or neurotic. But psychology itself finds it increasingly difficult to eliminate moral disorder from the etiology of mental disorder. The materialistic and mechanistic belief that a neurosis could be diagnosed without consideration of the patient's ethical valuations or behaviour, and that it could be 'cured' without any moral response or alteration, is one few psychologists today could be found to accept.

So while sacramental confession (including contrition and amendment) does not deal directly with psychoneurosis, we need not be surprised to find cases in which it is indirectly therapeutic: indirectly in so far as it may remove one of its causes. But it is perhaps as prevention rather than cure that sacramental confession, especially if practised regularly and with frank and unflinching self-examination, may serve the ends, if not of psychotherapy, then at least of mental hygiene and prophylaxis. Analytic experience witnesses to the very great extent to which unconsciousness of the 'shadow' side of life

contributes to the formation and persistence of neurotic complexes. A patient's failure to meet consciously and deliberately the challenges ('temptations' or 'tests' in Catholic parlance) which life brings him, whether from his own character or his environment or their mutual impact; his shady compromises, never fully faced, with life's conflicting demands; a consequent narcissistic idealisation of ego and corresponding neglect of the less acceptable traits of his character: all these, notoriously, are a common breeding ground of neurosis. Frequent and honest self-examination, and the necessity of formulating its findings in the confessional, may alone do much to promote a more complete self-awareness, and to prevent these less pleasing features of a personality from sinking into unconsciousness, where alone they will generate neurotic symptoms. Hence, while sacramental confession is not ordained to cure, it may do much to prevent, the disorders with which psychotherapy is concerned. We say, 'it *may*'; indeed it *should*. But other factors, inherited or environmental, may enter in to prevent its exercising this particular efficacy: and indeed in certain cases (notably those known to Catholics by the tragic symptoms of 'scruples') it may be the occasion of an increase rather than of an amelioration of the virulence of the disease.

On the other hand, while psychological analysis is not ordained to forgive sin, it may do much to free the patient from those compulsions which make both sin and repentance from sin—and even any clear-eyed self-examination—impossible.

It should also be remarked that, although psychological analysis cannot demand contrition of the patient, it is seldom successful unless it brings about something which, at very least, is not unlike it: a radical change of the patient's conscious outlook, a *metanoia* or change of mind, and with it of his moral valuations and behaviour. It is a truism that if an analysis does not change the patient's outlook on life, his whole mentality in greater or less degree, it achieves nothing. The very enlargement of consciousness involves a shifting of his whole centre of awareness, and with it of his standard of values. This change, however, is not something that he brings to analysis, but something which emerges from the process and its material themselves. Numerous case histories show striking resemblances not only between the results of analysis with those of religious and moral conversions, but also in the very symbols which eventually emerge from unconscious sources to induce the transformation. We may here recall C. G. Jung's celebrated declaration made in 1932: 'During the past thirty years, people from all the civilised countries of the earth have consulted me. I have

treated many hundreds of patients, the larger number being Protestants, a small number of Jews, and not more than five or six believing Catholics. Among all my patients in the second half of life . . . there has not been one whose problem in the last resort was not that of finding a religious outlook on life. It is safe to say that every one of them fell ill because he had lost that which the living religions of every age had given to their followers, and none of them has been really healed who did not regain his religious outlook. He added that 'This, of course, has nothing to do with a particular creed or membership of a church'; but he has also called constant attention to the parallels between dream processes and their healing symbolism with those of recorded religious initiations, conversions and illuminations. He has also remarked on the similarities, both in their mode and in their results, of the healing factors and experiences in analysis with what religious belief holds to be the effects of the operations of divine grace. That they are such in fact we can never have sufficient grounds to affirm with certitude; but neither can we *à priori* deny the possibility. The actual facts (unfortunately mostly locked away in case histories) certainly deserve thorough examination. While man is limited to the appointed channels of grace and forgiveness, God is not so limited; and there seems to be no foregone reason why the theologian can deny to dream-symbolism the *ex opere operantis* efficacy he must allow to the sacraments of the law of Nature, of the Old Law, the baptism of John, the sacramentals of the Church or—it may be added—the dream-symbols of the Scriptures. Though little can be affirmed or denied with certainty, the resemblances are sometimes too impressive to be totally ignored.

The most that can be said in summary is that although sacramental confession and psychological analysis are two wholly different things, pursuing two different but interrelated purposes, the purposes of the one may sometimes happen (*per accidens*) to be attained through the other. But when the prevention, or more rarely the cure, of psychoneurosis sometimes results from sacramental confession, this arises from the conscious human activities which it involves. If, however, divine grace and forgiveness are sometimes attained through the processes of psychological analysis, this can only be from the patient's response to God's uncovenanted mercies through the inner life of his soul.

GRACE BUILDS ON NATURE

BY

AUSTIN BARKER, O.P.



CERTAIN definite effects of divine grace operative through the Church may well be marked off; for in the Church the liberating and redemptive process is to be seen in full career. The Catholic axiom that grace does not mar nature but perfects it, is no empty phrase; nay rather, it epigrammatically states the exact Catholic doctrine, or the Catholic claim, in the teaching of the Church.

A first element in that doctrine declares that divine grace is a healing, a remedial principle in human life; and any impartial and reasonable examination of the Sacraments at work in the Church, of the purpose of daily Communion to which she urges her children, of the guidance for social conduct and international relations that periodically is given from the See of her supreme Head upon earth, will reveal more than enough evidence of the medicinal activity and the corrective influences which Christ authorised in the Apostolate which he committed to his Church. The evils in individuals, in human society, and in social relationships arise from no blind destiny moulded by material environment. Even if the Calvinism of the past still lingers sufficiently in our Western tradition to impose something like a mood of despair upon most men outside the Church, it is none the less an error of the mind, all the more apparent when it produces, as so often it does, a kind of paralysis hindering all serious reform.

But the evils in human society arise solely from private individual wills, men bound down by their own evil choice; and the cause now, as in all times, has been the human infirmity called sin; and the only serious reform, individual, social, political, must first deal with that. Christ came to heal that. All his precepts, all his counsels, all his divine tasks were to deliver men from that. To the woman in the Gospel he said: 'Where are they that accuse thee? Hath no man condemned thee? Who said: no man, Lord. And Jesus said: neither will I condemn thee; go, and now sin no more.' (John 8, 10-11.)

This same personal address, the same individual contact, the same rescuing process still continues wherever the Church sends her priests, and while world-wide she preaches the divine reproaches, world-wide she distributes the divine mercies and pardons of her Master, Christ. She is often feared; in this country generally by

those who have no experience whatsoever of her, save through the legends of her enemies. But she is also reasonably feared and sharply hated, and always by those who would oppress mankind, the powerful agents of the wealth of the world, the corruptive agents trading on the weakness of the flesh, the purveyors of sophistries whose delight is to dazzle and mislead mankind. But this experience of hatred has been familiar to her from the beginning, and she grows stronger as her persecutors seem to prevail. Then in her memory she best understands the divine promise in which Christ for all time identified her with himself: 'Who hears you, hears me; who despises you, despises me'. And in the immovable strength and mercy of her divine Founder she goes forward on her healing mission, not always and at once concerned with the material needs of men, but always and immediately concerned with the moral and material failures; rescuing, redeeming, forgiving, reconciling, healing with the *Gratia Sanans* of her divine Master, whose life and work on earth she continues.

But not only is the grace of Christ thus remedial of our individual sin, and reconciling the souls of men to God; it is furthermore a high sanctifying agency exalting the human will, informing the mind with his supreme purpose in human life, and divinely ennobling our whole being. By it is guarded and nourished the hidden life of personal unity with Christ. Through the sacramental system of the Church her children are led individually first to their own interior unity with their divine redeemer, and then to a full participation in his redemptive mission on earth. Here again her birthright is by sanction from the Father, and of the Eternal Word. The small group in which he first gathered his church together grew quickly to a vast throng encircling the earth: universal in time, universal in space, and similarly universal in gathering up all human effort into the living activity of the Word made flesh. 'I am the Vine, you are the branches; he that abideth in me and I in him, the same beareth much fruit, for without me you can do nothing. If any one abide not in me, he shall be cast forth as a branch and shall wither; and they shall gather him up, and cast him into the fire and he burneth. If you abide in me and my words in you, you shall ask whatever you will; and it shall be done to you. In this is my Father glorified, that you bring forth very much fruit and become my disciples.' (John 15.)

By the real presence within this mortal frame of this divine principle of action, a messianic nobility, a spiritual dignity and an immeasurable value give honour to every good and just action of human life. With this vocation in view it is difficult here not to

recall the ancient distinction of the Greeks between the measurable and the unmeasured, between the ordinary and the heroic, between the careful prudence of man and the inspired impulse that came from the divine. Aristotle has distinguished the small and earth-bound actions by which the ordinary man of reasonable prudence sought the common rewards of such effort from the noble and generous acts by which rare individuals could be lifted up into immortal rank, dedicated in the pursuit of supreme virtue, crowned in their deeds with divinity. These were the Heroes whose activities exceeded mere human measurement, whose achievements were superhuman, whose fame was not of man but of God.

Thus even in the sound common sense and plain ethics of the Greek philosopher there was already foreshadowed in the gropings of human reason a distinction whose significance and applications might be transferred into spheres of life which Aristotle had no reason to divine. There would be no purpose in his imagining how *all* human action could be saved to God, how *all* mortals might be raised to immortality, how any man's days might be, in daily communion, consecrated by God. For there needs now no learned study of the doctrine of the Incarnation to discover how that act of God was to touch and beatify all human activities with the splendour of the divine. Since the coming of Christ nothing henceforth could be trivial or common, for Christ had died to redeem all. When 'he who was in the form of God, emptied himself, taking the form of a servant, being made in the likeness of man, and in habit found as a man', he achieved a revolution in human conditions which potentially raised up all human action to his own divine level.

His consubstantial Sonship was no mere figure of speech, and the adoptive sonship to which he called mankind was a super-human exaltation of human life in all its articulations, to which created nature of itself could make no claim, from which human nature by its mere natural powers was excluded. Henceforth, the man in whom Christ's grace dwells, who now in divine grace lives, moves and has his being, such a man is no longer tied down to the frontiers imposed on him by earth. There lives within him a principle of thought and movement which links him through Christ to the eternal Fatherhood of God, rescuing his life from merely mortal significance, and informing his every action with a motive, a spirit and an effect which are infinite and eternal. 'I am come that they might have life, and life more abundantly.' Henceforth, by this principle, all human action is called to be heroic; all human endeavour is given an aim and a power that are beyond the dreams of this world. And it is to be particularly observed that this trans-

forming activity of God is not by the Church restricted to the lives of those renowned in her annals by the public and formal canonisation of their virtues. Of these saints raised to her altars, she does indeed guarantee and affirm the heroic quality of their religious life. But the same principle is declared to be at work in every soul that, by prayer, and communion in the sacraments of Christ, enjoys a living and personal unity with him.

The grace of this unity is principally in the mind by faith, and by charity in the will directive of all the human faculties. The charity of Christ is during our life on earth the source or spring from which all action and all work are to be consecrated; and the point to be emphasised here is that by this divine grace the soul with all its faculties of mind and body is brought up to a status and a mode of being that is real participation of the incarnate Word of God. If there now continues a dualism of elements in the converted soul, it is a dualism far different from that condemned by the writer quoted earlier. It is simply not the fact that some events and some states of mind are natural and others supernatural, or that every agent and every state of mind is either one or the other. The truth rather is that charity, faith, grace are essentially divine gifts in the supernatural order; and therefore in the human being now endowed with these every faculty is given a new orientation and is supplemented and caught up into a mode of being infinitely superior to the nature thus hallowed. It is at once both natural and supernatural, natural as the living subject which receives, supernatural by the motive and the life received; and it is the more perfectly natural, the more complete is its supernatural elevation by grace. For the gift is given not to destroy nature but divinely to perfect it.

Probably this truth will appear most unexpected to the modern groups outside the Church, whose partial abandonment of the Christian creed has led them to assume a real antithesis and opposition between the activities which are called secular and those which are known as religious. By many such people it does seem to be accepted that the religious element in one's life is a thing apart, a side-issue, or a department of the individual's being hardly connected at all with his other activities. 'Religion' is taken to be an unimportant private affair, or the assessment of a man's emotional preferences, of no evident connection with his trade or profession, his politics or sport. To those who inherit such an idea the news which the Church announces will come as a strange surprise, but it is news that will satisfy rather than repel the intelligent mind. 'Secular' and 'religious' will no longer be terms in opposition. By 'religious'

will be meant attention and action given immediately to God; by 'secular' will be meant those temporal and material duties and tasks which not immediately but mediately are ordained to God, for immediately they are ordained to proximate and temporal ends, but subordinately and ultimately they are ordained to the final end who is God. But all things are then in order, and all activities are then honoured with ultimate significance, for all things are restored in Christ.

To understand this truth is to explain and wholly to justify the zeal of the missionary, who conceives his vocation not simply as organised philanthropy, or a mere agency for some national, local and temporal civilisation; still less as a channel to further political prestige or commercial advantage; but strictly and solely as a divinely conceived and authorised mission to gather all men of all nations with all their native concerns into the redemptive and divinising company of Christ. Lest such phrases as these may seem too general to bring home the change in life that divine grace would achieve, it will always be necessary to keep in view the way of harmony between grace and nature which God perfects in his saints. His instituted sacraments were to be the means by which he initiates first the children, received into his fold through baptism, sheltered already in infancy by the cherished tradition of the Holy Family in which God himself had been the Child. Within that living tradition a mother's daily domestic round of toil became immediate worship that made honourable the mother because it gave full adoration to God. From this spring came the Christian tradition of the Catholic home, in which the human task of motherhood is dedicated by nuptial grace; where husband venerates wife and wife honours husband; and children are born to them to be prepared in the grace of a human home, for the eternal home of Heaven. Christ growing up, a child, a youth, took his place easily enough among the craftsmen of the village, and all work was good because all work was the doing of his Father's will. In a thousand Christian workshops for centuries after that tradition endured, and the unknown artists of Christendom who covered Europe with the splendours of stone and wood and fine glass might well all have lived and worked under the motto of the last of the prophets: 'He must increase and I must decrease'. In this they found a worthy motive for their labours; not merely human gain or human applause but first to praise God, and honour their divine Fellow-craftsman who was his son. They were artists all, heralds of the splendours of God; and in giving praise to his name they discovered true inspiration in their hearts and in their hands. Western Europe still shows

abundant evidence of their achievements; and admittedly since the catastrophic apostacies of the sixteenth century no like inspiration has been found. By the grace of God Catholic workmen could excel themselves in the work that was worship, and beauty flourished, flowered, simply so to say occurring, when an absolute and divine motive led their desires.

^a In other spheres of human action a similar order could prevail. By effect of the Confessional avarice could be rebuked and restrained. In public esteem justice could be effectively invoked, and the social pressure of charity guide its rule. The material and social inequalities that necessarily accompanied the varieties of status and function within the community could be neutralised and mitigated by communion in the Mass where individuals of all ranks were immediately united in prayer with the divine Redeemer inviting all immeasurably to himself. From the real tradition which he inaugurated, continued and developed in the lives of his saints, there was always a standard by which the arrogance of wealth could be corrected, and a ministry maintained, upholding the dignity of the poor. There is nothing utopian in the conception of such a society, and neither the efforts of agnostic historians unwittingly depreciating the ages of the faith, nor the zeal of Catholic writers honouring their genius, can conceal the spiritual ideas directing their life. Even to some modern reformers who would own no allegiance to the Church, the legends of the Catholic period have seemed worthy of study; and amid the babel of opinions clamouring in contemporary England, even non-Catholic writers have remembered the old Guilds of craftsmen, and have dreamed of a state whose lawyers would be vowed to poverty, whose doctors would be priestly, and their citizens free-men, owning their own homes and their workshops.

Such a state can be brought about, the Catholic Church affirms, by restoring all things in Christ, by treasuring afresh the grace of God, by man becoming receptive, inspired, moved by the living Redeemer.

This perfecting by grace, this rescue of the native thing which God came on earth to effect, this consecration and sanctification of all human toils by the redemptive sacrifice of Christ: this is the enduring good news which the Church will proclaim. The marrying of grace and nature is not a material juxtaposition of alien, incompatible and irreconcilable elements. The one God who created our nature is the same one God who brings it healing grace.

In subsequent articles an effort will be made to show how this unity of the two orders may be possible. No human reasoning, nor

merely human effort can bring it about. But in plain reason we shall maintain that if God so wills, and man would receive, then by divine power this can be done; with no incongruous or artificial separation of spheres; but rather with added power and honour to man who receives, and a more perfect manifestation of the mercy of God given; who out of nothing created the world, out of evil draws good, out of error draws the truth, and out of our human weaknesses and failings can raise saints to his own celestial company.



A NOTE ON THE FAMILY SPIRIT

IN the recent discussions in these pages on the nature of perfection and its bearing on religious life, one aspect of this life has not, perhaps, been sufficiently stressed. We are experiencing in our times a remarkable renaissance of the contemplative spirit. Many souls in all walks of life are thirsting for God. Some, interpreting this thirst in the terms of religious vocation, offer themselves to one or other of the religious orders, only to find after a period of probation that they are not suited to religious life.

The Catholic girl of today, while keenly interested in the doctrine of the Mystical Body, capable of grasping its implications and discussing it from all points of view, nevertheless, on entering religion, often finds it difficult to adjust herself and to live in harmony with the other members of the family. Perhaps one of the reasons for this may be that her previous background and training have not prepared her for living in a family. In the old days—and not so very old either—a girl growing up in a large family learned to give and take as a matter of course. She acquired many of the moral virtues by rubbing up against the other members of the family. Consideration for others, tact, a certain good-humoured acceptance of home-truths formed part of her everyday life. She learned to be loyal to the family code of honour. At the cost of personal inconvenience, social engagements had to be fulfilled through courtesy to the hostess, who would not be let down at the last moment, and so on. Now, all these conditions of family life find their exact counterpart in religion. The difficult character in the family is also a difficult character in the community; personal eccentricities are just as tiresome in religious life as in home life—for religious life is essentially family life, lived on a supernatural level and for a supernatural motive, but still family life *par excellence*.

It is a truism to say that the school cannot do what home-training has failed to do; neither can the noviciate compensate for the lack

of background. Grace does not work, so to speak, in the air: it pre-supposes pre-existing material, material capable of being given a higher perfection. Without this 'obediential' quality of the material, perfection, normally speaking, will not be attained.

It must be added that the professional background of the girl of today *can* be an excellent opportunity for learning to live happily with others, if it is used as such. And specialised talents and gifts of all kinds are of the utmost value if they are used to enrich the corporate life of religion, coupled with the saving grace of adaptability and docility. The richer the personality, the richer will be the life of the group to which she belongs; on the contrary, the movement of the 'robot', intent merely on toeing the line and conforming mechanically to custom, impoverishes the spirit of the family, destroying that spontaneity which is of the essence of life. Again, it is not the 'only child' but the 'only child mentality' which introduces the jarring note of false individualism into the family circle.

St Paul laid flat on the road to Damascus by an overwhelming mystical experience of the unity of Christ and his members, St Paul who could not find language rich enough to express this transcendent experience, nevertheless translated it, down to the last detail, in the homely language of everyday life—wearing himself out in anxious love that, at all costs, the family spirit might flourish and grow strong among the members of his various little groups of Christians.

To sum up: Religious life is composed of those who have bound themselves by vow to tend towards the same end—the perfection of charity. This pursuit of the same end constitutes a very closely knit relationship one with another. Each community of religious is a Mystical Body of Christ in miniature. In religion, then, we tend towards God, not as solitary individuals, but as members of a group and, by means of the group, striving, as St John of the Cross has it, 'to put love where there is no love', and to present an impregnable force of love to the opposing forces of selfishness and hate. And, as in a human family it is the mother who makes the home, so in the Mystical Body Mary performs a similar function, for she is not so much *my* Mother and *your* Mother as *the* Mother of the Mystical Body—Mother of the Whole Christ. She is a unitive force and influence, drawing the members of the Body together in closer and closer harmony, 'Until we all meet in the unity of faith and of the knowledge of the Son of God, unto a perfect man, unto the measure of the stature of the fulness of Christ'. (Eph. 4, 13.)

THE DOCTRINE OF THE PSALMS IN THE MAGNIFICAT

FOR THE FEAST OF THE VISITATION

In Judea God is known: his name is great in Israel. (Ps. 75.)

Let Israel rejoice in him that made him: and let the children of Sion be joyful in their King. (Ps. 149.)

My soul doth magnify the Lord and my spirit hath rejoiced in God my Saviour.

Who shall declare the powers of the Lord? Who shall set forth all his praises? (Ps. 105.)

Come and hear all ye that fear God and I will tell you what great things he hath done for my soul. I cried to him with my mouth and I extolled him with my tongue. (Ps. 65.)

Thou art my God and I will praise thee, thou art my God and I will exalt thee. (Ps. 117.)

I will praise thee, O Lord, among the people and I will sing to thee among the nations. (Ps. 107.)

Rejoice, be glad in the Lord, O ye just, praise becometh the upright. (Ps. 32.)

I will extol thee, O God my King. (Ps. 144.)

Bless the Lord, O my soul; O Lord God, thou art exceeding great. (Ps. 103.)

Oh magnify the Lord with me; his praise shall be always in my mouth. (Ps. 33.)

Thus will I bless thee all my life long. (Ps. 62.)

Because he hath regarded the humility of his Handmaid.

I will be glad and rejoice in thy mercy, for thou hast regarded my humility. (Ps. 30.)

He hath had regard to the prayer of the humble. (Ps. 101.)

Behold the eyes of the Lord are upon them that hope in his mercy. (Ps. 32.)

For behold from henceforth all generations shall call me Blessed.

Blessed is the man to whom the Lord hath not imputed sin and in whose spirit there is no guile. (Ps. 31.)

Blessed are the undefiled in the way; Blessed are they that search his testimonies; that seek him with their whole heart. (Ps. 118.)

His seed shall be mighty upon the earth; the generation of the righteous shall be blessed. (Ps. 111.)

Blessed is he whom thou hast chosen and taken to thee: he shall dwell in thy courts. (Ps. 64.)

For he that is mighty hath done great things to me and holy is his Name.

Sing to the Lord a new canticle, because he hath done wonderful things. (Ps. 97.)

The Lord hath done great things for us, we are become joyful. (Ps. 125.)

They shall speak of the might of thy terrible acts and shall declare thy wondrous works. (Ps. 144.)

Holy and terrible is his name. (Ps. 110.)

For his name alone is exalted; the praise of him is above heaven and earth, and he hath exalted the horn of his people. (Ps. 148.)

I will relate thy wonders, I will sing to thy name, O thou most High. (Ps. 9.)

And his mercy is from generation to generation to them that fear him.

The mercy of the Lord endureth for ever and his truth unto generation and generation. (Ps. 99.)

But the mercy of the Lord is from eternity and unto eternity upon them that fear him. (Ps. 102.)

He hath remembered his mercy and his truth towards the house of Israel. (Ps. 97.)

He hath showed strength in his arm—

The right hand of the Lord hath wrought strength: the right hand of the Lord hath exalted me. (Ps. 117.)

With thy arm thou hast redeemed thy people, the children of Jacob and of Joseph. (Ps. 76.)

His right hand and his holy arm have worked salvation for him. (Ps. 97.)

He hath scattered the proud in the conceit of their heart. He hath put down the mighty from their seat and hath exalted the humble.

The Lord lifteth up the meek; and bringeth the wicked down even to the ground. (Ps. 146.)

For the Lord is most exalted; he looks towards the lowly, and the proud he knoweth them from afar off. (Ps. 137.)

For thou wilt save the humble people, but will bring down the eyes of the proud. (Ps. 17.)

He shall exalt this one, he shall humble that one. (Ps. 74.)

Thou hast humbled the proud one, with the arm of thy strength thou hast scattered thine enemies. (Ps. 88.)

He will exalt the meek unto salvation. (Ps. 149.)

He hath filled the hungry with good things and the rich he hath sent empty away.

For he hath satisfied the empty soul; and hath filled the hungry soul with good things. (Ps. 106.)

The rich have wanted and have suffered hunger; but they that seek the Lord shall not be deprived of any good. (Ps. 33.)

The poor shall eat and be filled; and they shall praise the Lord that seek him. (Ps. 21.)

He hath received Israel his servant being mindful of his mercy—

He hath chosen for us his inheritance, the beauty of Jacob which he hath loved. (Ps. 46.)

He chose the tribe of Juda, Mount Sion which he loved. (Ps. 113.)

Juda was made his sanctuary, Israel his dominion. (Ps. 113.)

For the Lord hath chosen Jacob unto himself: Israel for his own possession. (Ps. 134.)

As he spoke to our father Abraham and to his seed for ever—

He hath remembered his covenant for ever: the word which he commanded to a thousand generations. Which he made to Abraham and his oath to Isaac. (Ps. 104.)

He remembered his holy word, which he had spoken to his servant Abraham. And he brought forth his people with joy, and his chosen with gladness. . . . Until the time that HIS WORD CAME. (Ps. 104.)

AND THE WORD WAS MADE FLESH—

The Lord hath sworn truth to David, and he will not make it void: OF THE FRUIT OF THY WOMB I WILL SET UPON THY THRONE. (Ps. 131.)

Let these things be written unto another generation; and the people that shall be created shall praise the Lord. (Ps. 101.)

Blessed is the nation whose God is the Lord; the people whom he hath chosen for his inheritance. (Ps. 32.)

How good is God to Israel; to them that are of a right heart. (Ps. 72.)



CORRESPONDENCE

'THE FOOT OF THE LADDER'

To the Editor,

LIFE OF THE SPIRIT.

Sir,—May I be permitted a few words of clarification for your correspondent, Augustine, over the important points he has raised?

First, I must repeat, the article *The Foot of the Ladder* was not a series of pious recommendations but a record of fact and

experience—admittedly very experimental and limited, but nevertheless experience. Nobody is asked to cram his day with spiritual exercises; those that were mentioned are made during leisure at the expense of such activities as going to the pictures, watching football matches and dog races, reading evening papers, listening to the radio and such like. Each gives up some portion of that kind of life—not necessarily all—for that purpose. Whatever these exercises are, and how much they are, they are done in an endeavour to come closer to Christ. They are not allowed to interfere with our professional and family responsibilities; but the aim is to try and combine the two, as I hoped I had made clear in my sample days.

I don't remember making out a case for anything, so I don't see what I have 'given away' by saying that people who are obviously not so far advanced in the spiritual life have no idea of contemplation. They would not presume to suggest that they had, but they *do* work on the principle, which your correspondent so rightly commends, that all their action must—and it does—proceed from the closest possible union with our Lord, which they attempt to achieve by prayer, frequent Communion, study of our Lord's life, penance, and similar 'multiplicity of exercises'.

As to fasting, I don't want to bandy texts or saints, because really they all seem to me to agree, but I recall a phrase of St Alphonsus Liguori: 'Woe to him that loves health more than sanctity'. However, the people I mentioned in connection with extreme fasting and voluntary penances have not suffered in health or strength from these practices, in fact the contrary is true; their mental and physical energy is impressive. They did not happen to be married men with families. I mentioned, too, that they were under directors, to whose care they can safely be left.

I would like also, if I may, to clarify our position about voluntary penance and the sacrament of the present moment. We certainly do not know more than the Holy Father, but we do know that he has asked repeatedly for the faithful to do voluntary penances in reparation for all the sins against our Lord and his blessed Mother, that he has said: 'Nor would even the stimulus of a Christian life lived according to conventional standards be efficacious. Today there is a need for the greatness of a Christian life lived in its fullness with persevering constancy.' I am sure your correspondent is living this kind of life, so surely he will allow us to do so too.

Of course our efforts are trivial and stumbling; but what we have found is that without some preliminary positive effort the words 'sacrament of the present moment' remained just words. I am talking of ordinary people, the subject of my article, who cannot begin to practise abandonment and true active obedience to the Will of God unless we, as it were, go into training by the practice of voluntary penance, even if it is at first nothing more than giving up something—or even fasting—on Friday, or getting up a few

minutes earlier every day to say an extra prayer. Otherwise we feel we would be like a man going into the boxing ring after a bottle of beer and a week in bed! We do not know whether we are right to feel like this, but it is our experience.

Finally, I congratulate your correspondent on his resolve to pass on the results of his studies to others. We too in our 'freak' societies—LOCK, KSC, CYMS, SOS, etc. (we number tertiaries and oblates among us too)—are doing the same thing. We are catechising, selling Catholic papers, helping parish priests, taking part in local housing problems, fighting local authorities about birth control and schools, bearding Communists in our unions, badgering the press and politicians, doing whatever comes to our hand, and have been for some time. This is the first time we have heard all this called 'futile'.—Yours, etc.,

THE AUTHOR OF *The Foot of the Ladder*.



REVIEWS

THE CHURCH IS ONE. By Alexei Stepanovich Khomiakov. With an introduction by Nicolas Zernov, D.Phil. (S.P.C.K.; 1s.3d.)

It is a little difficult for a Western Catholic to understand how it was that this little treatise by a layman, written just over a hundred years ago, should have acted as a catalyst on Russian Orthodox theology. Dr Zernov, in his informative introduction, points to the history of the Russian Church as the explanation of why that church had to wait until the middle of the nineteenth century for a statement of its ecclesiology; but the reason why Khomiakov's treatise had such effect is revealed, perhaps unwittingly, in this passage: 'The most controversial part of his teaching is connected with the question of the supreme authority in the Orthodox Church. Khomiakov ascribed it to the entire body of the faithful, and he subjected the decisions of the bishops to the final approval or disapproval of the whole Church. The majority of Eastern theologians, especially since the seventeenth century, considered that the Episcopate gathered at the Oecumenical Councils possessed the charisma of the Apostles, and was entitled therefore to define the Faith without further reference to the Church. The disagreement between these two points of view has not yet come to an end.' (p. 9.) At the same time and given the disunion among the Orthodox Patriarchs themselves, it is not altogether surprising that Khomiakov should have sought another source for the authority of the Church. Having rejected the Papacy and the episcopate, he had to fall back on what Catholic theologians call the *sensus communis fidelium*, and there is at least that point of contact between his thought and the classical Catholic theology. But it is surprising he did not see that not only is that source of authority

evanescent without the other two but that in practice it just will not, indeed cannot, work. Perhaps if Khomiakov had lived longer or in a later age he might have taken the course of Soloviev, his most authentic heir.

But probably the reason why he did not see the inadequacies of his own theory is the deep-rooted Orthodox dislike of the juridical, institutional element in the church, and the rest of his treatise is largely of the church as what we should call the Mystical Body. He speaks with deep understanding of this inner and liturgical aspect of the church, and there, it seems to us, he is in the tradition of the great Orthodox theologians. From the point of view of re-union, which, alas, as the years go by seems less and less practical politics, the importance of the modern re-presentation of the church as the Mystical Body is obvious, but also the wisdom of the Holy Father in insisting on the juridical aspect of the church is not less clear.

Perhaps, then, this apparently innocuous treatise on the Russian Orthodox Church is important because it has raised so many questions it did not answer. No doubt Catholic theologians in this country study these matters but they keep remarkably quiet about the results of their lucubrations. It is to be hoped that this convenient edition, which is, I imagine, the first English translation, will stimulate the sort of discussion that has been proceeding in France for some years. At any rate, we should be grateful to Dr Zernov for his excellent introduction, long but not long enough, and for his work in making this revealing treatise available to the English public.

J.D.C.

LA SAINTE EGLISE CATHOLIQUE. By Chanoine G. Philips. (Casterman, Tournai; n.p.)

The usual *De Ecclesia* textbook is a formidable and vastly dull production in which the reader loses himself in technical complexities and archaic controversies, while his synthetic powers are frustrated by the rigid morcellation of the subject matter under thesis headings. In one's struggle with such a work it is only too easy to lose sight of its true aim and to slip into the rôle of a participant in a debate, which may be interesting enough as an historical exercise, but which does not seem to have any vital relevance.

Canon Philips's book quite escapes this category. It is readable and has a real unity throughout. In simple and straightforward language the author tells us what the Church is and points to her existence as a living, God-guaranteed factor in history. Without effort he makes use of modern research to clarify the problems he encounters, and while his writing is traditional in the best sense of the word, he always writes in a contemporary context. It is refreshing to find a book on this subject which is up to date without being full of superficial chatter about post-tridentine legalism and

which treats the jurisdiction of the Church as integral to her salvific mission. One of the best chapters is the one on the problems connected with the teaching regarding the Church as the unique vehicle of salvation, while perhaps the weakest is that on infallibility, in which the distinction between what is *de fide* and what is the result of personal theological interpretation is not sufficiently clearly drawn. In a word *La sainte Eglise Catholique*, though not a great original work, is a thoroughly satisfactory statement of Catholic teaching on the Church which in itself provides a refutation of those who hold that the theology of the Church is non-existent.

IAN HISLOP, O.P.

THE SALVATION OF THE NATIONS. By Jean Daniélou. Translated by Angeline Bouchard. (Sheed & Ward; 6s.)

'The only thing to which we aspire, if we are truly Christians, is the total building up of the Mystical Body, for this is God's work.' It is at this level, the deepest and most significant of all, that Père Daniélou discusses the saving mission of the Church. His book is a theological meditation, at times almost startling in its originality of thought, wholly worthy of its theme. Having made clear the urgency of a right understanding of the missionary question, he dwells upon 'what must live and what must die' in the non-Christian religions. There follow chapters on the Incarnation, with particular reference to the significance of our Lord's Transfiguration, on the mission of the Holy Spirit, and on the Second Coming, about which the author has much that is striking to say. The book concludes with a series of reflections on 'The Glory of God'. But no list of chapter headings can convey the riches contained in these pages; very warmly we commend them to all who would understand the task of the Church, and of each of its members, in winning the as yet unbelieving world to Christ.

A.G.

LE JOUR DU SEIGNEUR. (Robert Laffons; 480 francs.)

The second national congress of the *Centre de Pastorale Liturgique*, held at Lyons in 1947, was devoted to the discussion of Sunday. Some account has already appeared in these pages of the significance of that gathering, which drew two thousand priests and several hundred layfolk from France and beyond. True to its purpose, the congress insisted that the liturgical understanding of the 'Day of the Lord' lies at the heart of Christian worship. Here was no academic discussion of former custom or future possibility. There was plentiful evidence of learning indeed; there was no want of frank analysis of the problems that face the pastoral clergy. But all was achieved within the setting of Sunday as the Day of Salvation, the weekly paschal feast which resumes the fact of redemption

and makes it available to the members of the Mystical Body of Christ.

For those who shared in the work of the Congress, the belated publication of its proceedings will have a particular value. The crowded events of such an occasion, the torrent of words, the physical impossibility of being everywhere at once: all this makes recollection in tranquillity the more grateful. But for all others who care about the establishment of the liturgy in its full stature within the common life of the Church, *Le Jour du Seigneur* will be a document of the first importance. It is enough to indicate the speakers and their subjects. Mgr Chevrot deals with Sunday in the life of 'good' Christians, Père Féret with the biblical sources of the Day of the Lord, Père Daniélou with the patristic evidence and Père Congar with the theology of Sunday. Sunday as the expression of Christian salvation is considered by Romano Guardini, while Canon Michaud discusses the real meaning of 'servile work'. Canon Martimort's subject is evening worship: Canon Boulard's that of the special problems of rural society. The Abbé Michonneau speaks of Sunday in the life of the priest and Dom Robeyns considers the eucharistic fast and the time of Mass. Finally Canon Pius Parsch describes a Sunday at his parish church in Austria. The book ends with the conclusions of the Congress, as they were read out on the last day by Cardinal Gerlier, who had presided over the whole.

ILLTUD EVANS, O.P.

TRANSPPOSITION AND OTHER ADDRESSES. By C. S. Lewis. (Geoffrey Bles; 2s.6d.)

In one of these addresses Dr Lewis speaks of himself as a 'middle-aged moralist'. Perhaps it is being scarcely fair to describe himself as 'middle-aged', because though it may be literally true, it suggests that he is slightly out of date, whereas, in fact, he is as 'modern' as, let us say, Mr T. S. Eliot. But when he calls himself a moralist, he is being strictly accurate. It is a distinction which he shares with very few others. Nothing is more evident in the modern world than the collapse of the moral law, and there are very few writers who have the temerity to try to set it up again. But Dr Lewis is one of the few who has had the courage to face the fact that it is not the law that has failed, but we who have failed to live up to the law. This has come to him as a revelation, strictly in the sense that through it he has been able to rediscover the truth of Christianity. It has given him an extraordinary insight into the weakness of 'modern thought', and an extraordinary power to re-interpret the Christian tradition. The first address on Transposition is a perfect example of this power to expose the fallacy underlying the 'scientific' view of the universe, and the second, his well-known sermon on the Weight of Glory, is a superb interpretation of the Christian idea of Transfiguration. In a third address on Membership

he exposes the weakness of the 'egalitarian' theory of democracy and shows the hierarchical character of membership in the mystical body of Christ. The last two addresses on Learning in War-time and The Inner Ring are less theological and reveal Dr Lewis more as a humanist than a moralist, but they show his practical good sense at its best. The only fault one is inclined to find in him is that which besets all moralists: he sometimes gives the impression that he knows too much. There is too little sense of the mystery and inconsequence of life. But this is a price which is worth paying for so much wisdom and good sense.

BEDE GRIFFITHS, O.S.B.

THE CREED IN SLOW MOTION. By Ronald Knox. (Sheed & Ward: 8s.6d.)

I began this book with the feeling that Mgr Knox was not being quite frank. If he must write these books for girls, why not show it in the title? Why not call them 'The Girls' Own Mass' and 'The Creed at Aldenham Hall'? But I was wrong—this book at any rate is not only for girls and any internal evidence that gives rise to that impression is mere lip-service to the audience before whom these talks were delivered. Anyone can benefit from this book, priests, perhaps, not least.

But it is an irritating book for all that. I remember the feelings of injustice that hung over my college days because professors wantonly did in public the very things which merited for us severe reprimands. Mgr Knox (as every school-girl will be quick to perceive) does something of the kind here. 'There are two separate styles in English, the conversational and the literary', so we are all taught as children and woe betide the child who uses 'can't' or 'shouldn't' in an essay! Mgr Knox uses these forms throughout his book—but he is a master of English and will get away with it, and will probably pick up besides quite a little praise (how tired he must be of it all!) for the sheer beauty of his style.

Then there is an artificiality evident which had I been listening to these instructions would have antagonised me, and which now in book form remains ineffectual. 'The very subject we are discussing this afternoon (if we find time to discuss it) . . . ' p. 5: and p. 9, 'We haven't left time to talk about the subject I meant to talk about this afternoon, which was, if you remember, that of belief in God'. As everyone knows the care with which Mgr Knox prepares his MSS. and the fidelity with which he adheres to them, these are ponderous devices and even if they were more airy they would still merit condemnation on the mere score of artificiality.

I think Mgr Knox misses some good openings. Take, for instance, the description of the end of the torch-light procession at Lourdes: 'tens of thousands of candles flickering there below . . . So many of them, they don't look like separate candles; it is just a vast haze of light. And the people are singing Credo; Credo, not Credimus.'

What an opportunity to ram home the Unity of the Mystical Body, but Mgr Knox throws it away with the prodigality of an artist and prefers to reconstruct those separate flames from out that vast haze. 'When we sing Credo, we are not meant to lose ourselves in a crowd. Every clause of it is the expression of my opinion.' That idea can be brought out too (and I would delight to see it worked out by the author) but it should wait till the end, till Amen, till So be it, the assent of my mind *and* heart. (Amen to me means, 'I would not alter one iota of it, God, even if I could'.)

There are questions of policy, too, over which controversy could rage. What defence ought a Catholic girl to adopt when her non-Catholic friends doubt Catholic doctrine? Should she say, 'Well, I am a Catholic and so have to believe it'? Mgr Knox would seem to disapprove of that line. 'There are perfectly good grounds on which you can tackle a person who says the soul is destroyed at death: not perhaps so as to convince him of the contrary, but at least to show him that he can't prove his case. And those grounds as a Catholic you ought to know; not for your own sake so much as for the sake of other people.' (p. 7.) But the first method of defence is really an attack. Every argument by this means can be turned into an argument on the divine origin of the Church: know that thoroughly and your arguments will have a chance of getting you somewhere. The other way, however, may lead to the senseless and harmful practice of banging your heads together at the end of a cul-de-sac.

A lot more of this kind could be written—these remarks on some aspects of the first chapter are only an indication. A full commentary would need another book and this book is not quite as important as that. Should it have been written at all? Mgr Knox has more justification than many another for publishing his sermons, mainly because he never preaches. Everything of his is polished and complete, has its own essence and existence before it becomes public, so that his sermons are rather readings from his own unpublished works. To that extent the case for publishing is almost greater than the case for delivering them as talks. In this case, however, the style condemns it most. There can be no girls' (nor for that matter boys') school which as a school could assimilate more than one-tenth of these talks, and I remember the remark of a tough boiler-hand to whom I gave 'The Mass in Slow Motion': 'Yes, it is good but I felt such a fool reading a girls' book'. Many other people will feel like that and, I fear, be put off reading this very good book by the artificial and accidental presentation of Catholic (i.e. for all) belief.

Mgr Knox has now written three books on the Creed: *The Belief of Catholics*, *I Believe* and *The Creed in Slow Motion*, but the greatest of these is *In Soft Garments*.

TERENCE TANNER.

EXTRACTS

A PEACE-OFFERING. In an age which has but little time for the peasant we might do well to reflect upon the example of a peasant from Upper Austria whose integrity led him to die for peace.

Franz Jägerstätter came from the parish of St Radegund, which is well known for its passion play. From the first he seems to have smelt the evil in National Socialism very keenly, and to have foreseen that he would have to refuse unconditionally to serve in the Wehrmacht; in preparation for this he intensified his spiritual life and joined the Third Order of St Francis. As a consequence of his refusal Jägerstätter was condemned to death by a Berlin court on the 6 July 1943. During the months which followed many attempts were made to persuade him against his resolution, but even his wife's entreaties could not shake him.

Once the priest who was attending him realised that Jägerstätter's mind was made up he encouraged him in his course. In order to inspire him the priest mentioned another Austrian who just a year before had also sacrificed his life rather than go into the armed forces and fight for an unjust cause; this man was Father Franz Reinisch. When Franz heard this story of another Franz, an Austrian like himself, and furthermore a priest, his eyes lit up and he sighed deeply, just as though a great weight had been lifted from his soul. Then he said, 'I have always told myself so—that I couldn't be on the wrong track. But now that you say a priest has done just the same and has died because of it, then I must do as he did. Before his execution on the 9 August, the feast of the Curé d'Arss he wrote a letter to his family which ended, 'May God accept my life as expiation for my own sins, and for the sins of others as well'

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ANOTHER HOLY MAN is described in *Vita Christiana* (March-April number). Don Abbo, known throughout the Riviera of Ponente as 'the Saint', was killed in an air raid in February, 1944. He was chaplain to a prison at Imperia. He was a great apostle of the dispossessed as well as of the prisoners. He lived the life of utter poverty, begging always for others and meeting all with Christ-like simplicity and sympathy. His attitude was one of charity above all. He believed that most of his 'parishioners' in the prison would not have been there had they met a good Christian in time. When someone incredulously indicated a murderer among these parishioners, Don Abbo replied, 'He was without father or mother, no one saw to his Christian upbringing; he has always been on the street; misery has always been his inseparable companion. Underneath he is a good boy. I visit him every day and he is very happy

to see me.' 'The Saint' was evidently the sort of man to stem the tide of Communism in his own country; and the secret of his success was clearly the interior spirit of peace for which he was so well known. He was always serene.

* * * *

VOCATIONS to religious life are badly needed by many Orders and Congregations, and there are many who feel drawn but do not know where to turn for advice or suggestions as to the different forms of dedicated life. The Centre in Claverton Street run by the Filiae Matris Boni Consilii has already done a great work in contacting those who have vocations with those who need them. Now they have begun their own magazine, a quarterly. *Quo Vadis?* (27 Claverton Street, S.W.1; 2s.6d. per annum) is simple and attractively presented so that older girls at school as well as those who have left will find it interesting. There are articles on the way of deciding on a vocation and a series on the different religious orders.

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THE SUPPLEMENT of *La Vie Spirituelle* (No. 9, May: 3s.6d. from BLACKFRIARS) is of particular interest. As it aims to be more specialised and scientific than the review itself, the studies on Scruples by J. Jérôme, and on the history of the word 'Mystic' by the celebrated Père Bouyer will repay close study. There is also a shorter article on the relation of the new Saint Lewis Mary de Montfort to the sources of his teaching in fourteenth century spirituality. Saints who appear to present new aspects of devotion to the humanity of Christ or to the person of Our Lady, for example, such as St Margaret Mary or St Lewis Mary, often stand in need of a theologian to show that such devotion is also to be found in the tradition of the Church and is newly presented and emphasised rather than new in itself. There are many parallels between St Lewis Mary and Henry Suso. J.-A. Bizet shows the close relation between the former's *L'Amour de la Sagesse Eternelle* and the latter's *Horologium Sapientiae*.

For Montfort Wisdom has taken flesh in the womb of the Virgin Mary; having found grace before God, Mary has had 'the power to incarnate and to give Eternal Wisdom to the world'. From this she has received the power also to incarnate him, through the activity of the Holy Spirit, in the elect.

It was from this point that the saint developed his *True Devotion*.

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REVIEW FOR RELIGIOUS (May: St Mary's, Kansas) presents the traditional teaching of the development of the Mystical Life in an article from a confrère of Thomas Merton, American Cistercian.

DIEU VIVANT (No. 13—Editions du Seuil) is of special interest for its articles on the application of general sacramental theology to modern problems—for example, Père Danielou writes on 'Histoire Marxiste et Histoire Sacramentaire'.

REVUE D'ASCETIQUE & DE MYSTIQUE (Jan.-March 1949) contains an article on 'Thomas de Jésus et la Contemplation Acquisée' by Father Gabriel de Ste M. Madeleine, the Carmelite who has done so much to thrash out the difficult problem of acquired and infused contemplation.



BOOKS RECEIVED

- Bloomsbury Publications.* S. M. Ansgar, O.P.: *Painting Book of Our Lady of Fatima*, 2s. 6d.
Browne and Nolan. W. Stevenson, S.J.: *Christ Our Light*, 8s. 6d.; M. Tynan: *First Communion Book*, 6s. 0d.
Burns, Oates and Washbourne. Ronald Knox: *On Englishing the Bible*, 6s. 0d.; M.L.H.: *Sister Xavier Berkeley*, 15s. 0d.; Hubert van Zeller, O.S.B.: *Old Testament Stories*, 6s. 6d.
Cambridge University Press. E. K. Ellis: *St Catherine of Siena*, 1s. 6d.
Casterman. Jean le Presbytre: *A la Croisée des Chemins*, 48 fr.
Cerf. La Sainte Bible, Ezechiel; Corinthiens; l'Ecclesiaste, n.p.
Christ Church Publications. Percy Maryon-Wilson: *The Paradoxical Society*, 1s. 0d.
Armand Colin. *Litterature Religieuse*, 1400 fr.
Irish Rosary. Edwin Essex, O.P.: *Eyes of Mercy*, 7s. 6d.
Mercier. Alice Curtayne: *St Anthony of Padua*, 5s. 0d.; James A. Kleist, S.J. (trans.): *Ancient Christian Writers*, 15s. 0d.
Ouvrieres. L.-J. Lébre: *Action, Marche vers Dieu*, n.p.
Talbot and Co. Wilfrid Couch: *Children in Church*, 2s. 6d.
Walsingham College. Donald Hole: *Walsingham, England's Nazareth*, n.p.

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